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9

GLOBAL ECOLOGY AND THE COMMON GOOD

John Bellamy Foster

WALTER BENJAMIN AND MARXISM

Michael Löwy

KOREA, CHINA, AND THE UNITED STATES: A LOOK BACK

Hugh Deane

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CONTENTS | VOLUME 46 NUMBER 9 FEBRUARY 1995

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: Global Ecology and the Common Good
by John Bellamy Foster 1

WALTER BENJAMIN AND MARXISM by Michael Löwy 11

KOREA, CHINA, AND THE UNITED STATES: A LOOK BACK
by Hugh Deane 20

REMARKS ON RECEIVING THE NECLC TOM PAINE AWARD
by Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy 32

BOOKS
The Political Is Personal by Annette T. Rubinstein 39
The Discipline of Desire by Michael Merrill 42
The Marxian Dialectic by James Lawler 48
Standing Up to the New Leviathan by James Devine 54
Fire Eyes—Fire Between the Legs by Joyce Stoller 58
The Shanghai Textbook 61

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

There are two ways of looking at the Mexican financial crisis that erupted in the final days of 1994 and is still making waves as we write (mid-January). One has to do with the situation in Mexico itself, the other with what may be called its exemplary character. Let us consider the latter first.

The term exemplary is usually applied to something that is positive and worthy of emulation. But an example can just as well be something that is negative and, if possible, to be avoided. In both cases, to qualify as exemplary it must be reasonably representative of the class of phenomena to which it belongs.

No one thinks the Mexican crash is something to be emulated, but hardly anyone who is knowledgeable about today's global financial situation is in any doubt about its representative character. A few citations from recent press reports should be enough to establish the point. "Mexico," says

(Continued on inside back cover)

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GLOBAL ECOLOGY AND THE COMMON GOOD

by JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER

Over the course of the twentieth century human population has increased more than threefold and gross world product perhaps twentyfold. Such expansion has placed increasing pressure on the ecology of the planet. Everywhere we look—in the atmosphere, oceans, watersheds, forests, soil, etc.—it is now clear that rapid ecological decline is setting in.[1]

Faced with the frightening reality of global ecological crisis, many are now calling for a moral revolution that would incorporate ecological values into our culture. This demand for a new ecological morality is, I believe, the essence of Green thinking. The kind of moral transformation envisaged is best captured by Aldo Leopold's land ethic, which said,

> We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

Yet behind most appeals to ecological morality there lies the presumption that we live in a society where the morality of the individual is the key to the morality of society. If people as individuals could simply change their moral stance with re-

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John Bellamy Foster teaches sociology at the University of Oregon and is a member of the board of Monthly Review Foundation. His book *The Vulnerable Planet* was recently published by Monthy Review Press. This article is a slightly revised version of a keynote luncheon address delivered at "Watersheds '94," a conference organized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10, Bellevue, Washington, September 28, 1994.

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spect to nature and alter their behavior in areas such as propagation, consumption, and the conduct of business, all would be well.[2]

What is all too often overlooked in such calls for moral transformation is the central institutional fact of our society: what might be called the global "treadmill of production." The logic of this treadmill can be broken down into six elements. First, built into this global system, and constituting its central rationale, is the increasing accumulation of wealth by a relatively small section of the population at the top of the social pyramid. Second, there is a long-term movement of workers away from self-employment and into wage jobs that are contingent on the continual expansion of production. Third, the competitive struggle between businesses necessitates on pain of extinction the allocation of accumulated wealth to new, revolutionary technologies that serve to expand production. Fourth, wants are manufactured in a manner that creates an insatiable hunger for more. Fifth, government becomes increasingly responsible for promoting national economic development, while ensuring some degree of "social security" for at least a portion of its citizens. Sixth, the dominant means of communication and education are part of the treadmill, serving to reinforce its priorities and values.[3]

A defining trait of the system is that it is a kind of giant squirrel cage. Everyone, or nearly everyone, is part of this treadmill and is unable or unwilling to get off. Investors and managers are driven by the need to accumulate wealth and to expand the scale of their operations in order to prosper within a globally competitive milieu. For the vast majority the commitment to the treadmill is more limited and indirect: they simply need to obtain jobs at liveable wages. But to retain those jobs and to maintain a given standard of living in these circumstances it is necessary, like the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*, to run faster and faster in order to stay in the same place.

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In such an environment, as the nineteenth-century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once said, "A man can do what he wants. But he can't want what he wants." Our wants are conditioned by the kind of society in which we live. Looked at in this way, it is not individuals acting in accordance with their own innate desires, but rather the treadmill of production on which we are all placed that has become the main enemy of the environment.[4]

Clearly, this treadmill leads in a direction that is incompatible with the basic ecological cycles of the planet. A continuous 3 percent average annual rate of growth in industrial production, such as obtained from 1970 to 1990, would mean that world industry would double in size every twenty-five years, grow sixteenfold approximately every century, increase by 250 times every two centuries, 4,000 times every three centuries, etc. Further, the tendency of the present treadmill of production is to expand the throughput of raw materials and energy because the greater this flow, from extraction through the delivery of final products to consumers, the more opportunity there is to realize profits. In order to generate profits, the treadmill relies heavily on energy-intensive, capital-intensive technology, which allows it to economize on labor inputs. Yet increased throughput and more substitution of energy and machines for labor mean a more rapid depletion of high-quality energy sources and other natural resources, and a larger amount of wastes dumped into the environment. It is unlikely therefore that the world could sustain many more doublings of industrial output under the present system without experiencing a complete ecological catastrophe. Indeed, we are already overshooting certain critical ecological thresholds.[5]

Matters are made worse by the tendency in recent decades to move from "gross insults" to the environment to "microtoxicity." As synthetic products (like plastic) are substituted for natural ones (like wood and wool), the older pollutants associated with nineteenth-century industrialization are being replaced by more hazardous pollutants such as those

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resulting from chlorine-related (organochlorine) production—the source of DDT, dioxin, Agent Orange, PCBs, and CFCs. The degree of toxicity associated with a given level of output has thus risen fairly steadily over the last half century.[6]

It would seem, then, that from an environmental perspective we have no choice but to resist the treadmill of production. This resistance must take the form of a far-reaching moral revolution. In order to carry out such a moral transformation we must however confront what the great American sociologist C. Wright Mills called "the higher immorality." The "higher immorality" for Mills was a "structural immorality" built into the institutions of power in our society—in particular the treadmill of production. "In a civilization so thoroughly business-penetrated as America," he wrote, money becomes "the one unambiguous marker of success . . . the sovereign American value." Such a society, dominated by the corporate rich with the support of the political power elite, is a society of "organized irresponsibility," where moral virtue is divorced from success and knowledge from power. Public communication, rather than constituting the basis for the exchange of ideas necessary for the conduct of a democracy, is largely given over to "an astounding volume of propaganda for commodities . . . addressed more often to the belly or to the groin than to the head or the heart." The corrupting influence that all of this has on the general public is visible in the loss of the capacity for moral indignation, the growth of cynicism, a drop in political participation, and the emergence of a passive commercially centered existence. In short, the higher immorality spells the annihilation of a meaningful moral and political community.[7]

Manifestations of this higher immorality—in which money divorced from all other considerations has become the supreme reality—are all around us. In 1992 alone U.S. business spent perhaps $1 trillion on marketing, simply convincing people to consume more and more goods. This exceeded by about $600 billion the amount spent on education—public and private—at all levels. Under these circumstances we can

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expect people to grow up with their heads full of information about saleable commodities, and empty of knowledge about human history, morality, culture, science, and the environment. What is most valued in such a society is the latest style, the most expensive clothing, the finest car. Hence, it is not surprising that more than 93 percent of teenage girls questioned in a survey conducted in the late 1980s indicated that their favorite leisure activity was to go shopping. Not long ago *Fortune* magazine quoted Dee Hock, former head of the Visa bank card operation, as saying, "It's not that people value money more but that they value everything else so much less—not that they are more greedy but that they have no other values to keep greed in check." "Our social life is organized in such a way," German environmentalist Rudolf Bahro has observed,

> that even people who work with their hands are more interested in a better car than in the single meal of the slum-dweller on the southern half of the earth or the need of the peasant there for water; or even a concern to expand their own consciousness, for their own self-realization.

Reflecting on the growing use of pesticides in our society, Rachel Carson wrote that this was indicative of "an era dominated by industry, in which the right to make money, at whatever cost to others, is seldom challenged."[8]

Given the nature of the society in which we live, one must therefore be wary of solutions to environmental problems that place too much emphasis on the role of individuals, or too little emphasis on the treadmill of production and the higher immorality that it engenders. To be sure, it is necessary for individuals to struggle to organize their lives so that in their consumption they live more simply and ecologically. But to lay too much stress on this alone is to place too much onus on the individual, while ignoring institutional facts. Alan Durning of the Worldwatch Institute, for example, argues that

> we consumers have an ethical obligation to curb our consumption, since it jeopardizes the chances for future generations. Unless we climb

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down the consumption ladder a few rungs, our grandchildren will inherit a planetary home impoverished by our affluence.

This may seem like simple common sense but it ignores the higher immorality of a society like the United States in which the dominant institutions treat the public as mere consumers to be targeted with all of the techniques of modern marketing. The average adult in the United States watches 21,000 television commercials a year, about 75 percent of which are paid for by the 100 largest corporations. It also ignores the fact that the treadmill of production is rooted not in consumption but in production. Within the context of this system it is therefore economically naive to think that the problem can be solved simply by getting consumers to refrain from consumption and instead to save and invest their income. To invest means to expand the scale of productive capacity, increasing the size of the treadmill.[9]

Even more questionable are the underlying assumptions of those who seek to stop environmental degradation by appealing not to individuals in general but to the ethics of individuals at the top of the social pyramid and to corporations. Thus in his widely heralded book, *The Ecology of Commerce*, Paul Hawken argues for a new environmental ethic for businesspeople and corporations. After advocating an ambitious program for ecological change, Hawken states, "Nothing written, suggested, or proposed is possible unless business is willing to embrace the world we live within and lead the way." According to Hawken,

> the ultimate purpose of business is not, or should not be, simply to make money. Nor is it merely a system of making and selling things. The promise of business is to increase the general well-being of humankind through service, a creative invention and ethical philosophy.

Thus he goes on to observe that,

> If Dupont, Monsanto, and Dow believe they are in the synthetic chemical production business, and cannot change this belief, they and we are in trouble. If they believe they are in business to serve people, to help solve problems, to use and employ the ingenuity of workers to improve the lives of people around them by learning from the nature that gives us life, we have a chance.[10]

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The central message here is that businesspeople merely have to change the ethical bases of their conduct and all will be well with the environment. Such views underestimate the extent to which the treadmill of production and the higher immorality are built into our society. Ironically, Hawken's argument places too much responsibility and blame on the individual corporate manager—since he or she too is likely to be a mere cog in the wheel of the system. As the great linguistics theorist and media critic Noam Chomsky has explained,

> The Chairman of the board will always tell you that he spends his every waking hour laboring so that people will get the best possible products at the cheapest possible price and work in the best possible conditions. But it is an institutional fact, independent of who the chairman of the board is, that he'd better be trying to maximize profit and market share, and if he doesn't do that, he's not going to be chairman of the board any more. If he were ever to succumb to the delusions that he expresses, he'd be out.[11]

To be successful within any sphere in this society generally means that one has thoroughly internalized those values associated with the higher immorality. There is, as economist John Kenneth Galbraith has pointed out, a "culture of contentment" at the top of the social hierarchy: those who benefit most from the existing order have the least desire for change.[12]

Resistance to the treadmill of production therefore has to come mainly from the lower echelons of society, and from social movements rather than individuals. This can only occur to quote German Green Party leader Petra Kelly, if ecological concerns are "tied to issues of economic justice—the exploitation of the poor by the rich." Behind every environmental struggle of today there is a struggle over the expansion of the global treadmill—a case of landless workers or villagers who are compelled to destroy nature in order to survive, or of large corporations that seek to expand profits with little concern for the natural and social devastation that they leave in their wake. Ecological development is possible, but only if the economic as well as environmental injustices associated with

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the treadmill are addressed. An ecological approach to the economy is about having *enough*, not having more. It must have as its first priority *people*, particularly poor people, rather than production or even the environment, stressing the importance of meeting basic needs and long-term security. This is the common morality with which we must combat the higher immorality of the treadmill. Above all we must recognize the old truth, long understood by the romantic and socialist critics of capitalism, that increasing production does not eliminate poverty.[13]

Indeed, the global treadmill is so designed that the poor countries of the world often help finance the rich ones. During the period from 1982 to 1990, the Third World was a "net *exporter* of hard currency to the developed countries, on average $30 billion per year." In this same period Third World debtors remitted to their creditors in the wealthy nations an average of almost $12.5 billion per month in payments on debt alone. This is equal to what the entire Third World spends each month on health and education. It is this system of global inequity that reinforces both overpopulation (since poverty spurs population growth) and the kind of rapacious development associated with the destruction of tropical rain forests in the Third World.[14]

* * *

For those of you with a pragmatic bent, much of what I have said here may seem too global and too abstract. The essential point that I want to leave you with, however, is the notion that although we are all on the treadmill, we do not all relate to it in the same way and with the same degree of commitment. I have found in my research into the ancient forest struggle in the Northwest—and others have discovered the same thing in other settings—that ordinary workers have strong environmental values even though they may be at loggerheads with the environmental movement. In essence

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they are fighting for their lives and livelihoods at a fairly basic level.[15]

We must find a way of putting people first *in order to protect the environment.* There are many ways of reducing the economic stakes in environmental destruction on the part of those who have little direct stake in the treadmill itself. But this means taking seriously issues of social and economic inequality as well as environmental destruction. Only by committing itself to what is now called "environmental justice" (combining environmental concerns and social justice) can the environmental movement avoid being cut off from those classes of individuals who are most resistant to the treadmill on social grounds. The alternative is to promote an environmental movement that is very successful in creating parks with Keep Out! signs, and yet which is complicit with the larger treadmill of production. By recognizing that it is not people (as individuals and in aggregate) that are enemies of the environment but the historically specific economic and social order in which we live, we can, I believe, find sufficient common ground for a true moral revolution to save the earth.

NOTES

1. James Gustave Speth, "Can the World Be Saved?," in Anthony B. Wolbarst, *Environment in Peril* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 64-65.
2. Leopold, *The Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. viii.
3. The concept of the "treadmill of production" is taken from Allan Schnaiberg, *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 205-50, and Schnaiberg and Kenneth Allan Gould, *Environment and Society* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1949), p. viii. In Schnaiberg's earlier work the treadmill is situated in the historical context of monopoly capitalism as described in Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966) and James O'Connor's, *Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973). It should be noted that the third element of the treadmill listed in the text above—the revolutionization of the means of production on pain of extinction—is attenuated in certain ways under monopoly capitalism, but still remains a general tendency of the system.

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4. Schopenhauer quoted in Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: Dell, 1964), p. 20.
5. Chandler Morse, "Environment, Economics and Socialism," *Monthly Review* 30, no. 11 (April 1979): 12-15; Petra K. Kelly, *Thinking Green!* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1994), pp. 22-23. The tendency of the system to draw upon ever larger throughputs of raw materials and energy was countered somewhat by increasing energy efficiency (measured by the ratio of GDP to commercial fuels consumed) in the advanced capitalist countries in the 1970s and early 1980s. Since the mid-1980s, however, progress in this respect has slowed as a result of falling energy prices. In the United States, which uses about as much energy as the entire Third World, energy efficiency has remained essentially unchanged since 1986. See Lester Brown et al., *Vital Signs 1992* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), pp. 54-55, and *Vital Signs 1994*, pp. 126-27.
6. Speth, "*Can the World Be Saved?*," p. 65.
7. Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 338-61.
8. Kevin J. Clancy and Robert S. Shulman, *Across the Board*, October 1993, p. 38; *The Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1993* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1993), p. 147; "The Money Society," *Fortune*, 6 July 1987, 26-31; Bahro, *Socialism and Survival* (London: Heretic Books, 1982), p. 31; Carson, "Silent Spring—III," *The New Yorker*, 38, no. 19 (June 30, 1962): 67.
9. Durning, *How Much Is Enough?* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), pp. 136-37; Jerry Mander, *In the Absence of the Sacred* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991), pp. 78-79.
10. Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 1-2, 55-56, 216.
11. Chomsky interview, Bill Moyers, ed., *A World of Ideas* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 42.
12. Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).
13. Kelly, *Thinking Green!*, p. 25; Ben Jackson, *Poverty and the Planet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 182-83; Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 221.
14. Quotation from Cheryl Payer, *Lent and Lost* (London: Zed Books, 1991), p. 115; also Susan George, "The Debt Boomerang," in Kevin Danaher, ed. *Fifty Years Is Enough* (Boston: South End Press, 1994), p. 29.
15. Foster, "The Limits of Environmentalism Without Class" *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 4, no. 1 (March 1993): 11-41; Thomas Dunk, "Talking About Trees: Environment and Society in Forest Workers' Culture," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 31, no. 1 (February 1994): 14-34.

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WALTER BENJAMIN AND MARXISM

by MICHAEL LÖWY

Walter Benjamin, born in a bourgeois Berlin Jewish family in 1892, was not only a brilliant literary critic and sociologist of culture, but also one of the most creative modern Marxist thinkers. A friend of Bertolt Brecht, Theodor Adorno, and Gershom Scholem (the well known historian of Jewish mysticism), he wrote his first books on the concept of art criticism in German romanticism and on German baroque drama. A sympathizer of the communist movement, he visited the Soviet Union in 1927 and 1928 but never joined the German Communist Party. Forced into exile by the Nazis in 1933, he lived precariously in France with a stipend from the Frankfurt School, which published in its Journal for Social Research *some of his most important essays (on Baudelaire and on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction). Trying to escape the Nazi occupation of France by crossing the Pyrenees in September 1940, he was arrested by the Spanish (Franco) police. Threatened with being turned over to the Gestapo, he preferred to commit suicide. His last writing, the* Theses On the Concept of History, *is one of the most important documents of revolutionary theory in our times. Known only to a small circle of people during his life, he became, after the 1960s, an increasingly influential thinker for a new generation of radical students and intellectuals in Europe and America.*

Benjamin was first introduced to the English speaking public with a collection of essays, Illuminations *(1968), selected and edited*

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by the cold war publicist Hannah Arendt. In a lengthy introduction, Arendt minimized Benjamin's commitment to Marxism. Arendt claimed that "without realizing it" Benjamin had more in common with the Nazi Martin Heidegger than "with the dialectical subtleties of his Marxist friends." Since then, Benjamin's work (and Heidegger's hidden past) have become widely known and Arendt's project of falsification can now truly be said to have failed. Like that of his contemporaries Gramsci and Lukacs, Benjamin's Marxist thought permits in its subtlety a variety of interpretations and applications to today's world. The following essay focuses on an aspect of Benjamin's scorching critique of positivist, inevitablist vulgar Marxism. —The Editors

Walter Benjamin occupies a unique place in the history of modern Marxist thought. He is the first partisan of historical materialism to break radically with the ideology of progress. His Marxism, therefore, has a distinct critical quality, which sets it apart from the dominant and "official" forms and gives him a formidable methodological superiority.

This peculiarity has to do with Benjamin's ability to incorporate into the body of Marxist revolutionary theory insights from the Romantic critique of civilization and from the Jewish Messianic tradition. Both elements are present in his early writings, particularly *The Life of the Students* (1915), where he had already rejected "a conception of history which, confident in the infinity of time, distinguishes only the speed at which humanity and epochs roll, quicker or slower, along the tracks of progress"—a conception characterized by "an inability to see the connections between things, a lack of recognition for the precise and forceful demands that the past makes on the present" as opposed to the *utopian images* such as *The Messianic Kingdom* or *The French Revolution.*[1]

Benjamin's first reference to communism appears in 1921 in his *Critique of Violence*, where he celebrates the "devastating and on the whole justified" critique of parliaments by the Bolsheviks and the Anarcho-Syndicalists.[2] This link between communism and anarchism will be an important aspect

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of his political evolution: his Marxism will to a large extent take on a libertarian coloring.

But it is only after 1924, when he reads Lukacs's *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and discovers practical communism through the eyes of Asja Lacis, a Soviet artist and political activist he met in Capri, that Marxism becomes a key component of his world view. In 1929 Benjamin still refers to Lukacs's *opus* as one of the few books which remain lively and topical. He refers to it as

> the most achieved philosophical work in the literature of Marxism. Its uniqueness lies in the assurance with which it grasps in the critical situation of philosophy the critical situation of class-struggle, and in the coming concrete revolution the absolute implementation and the last word of theoretical knowledge. The polemic against it by the hierarchy of the Communist Party under the leadership of Deborin confirms in its way the scope of the book.[3]

This commentary illustrates Benjamin's independence of mind toward the "official" doctrine of Soviet Marxism in spite of his sympathies for the USSR.

In a letter to Gershom Scholem (September 1924) he refers to the tension between his "nihilism" and Lukacs's Hegelian dialectics but emphasizes that he is attracted by the political praxis of communism as a "binding attitude." What interests him foremost in Lukacs's book is *the unity between theory and practice* that constitutes the philosophical hard core of the work and gives it an immense advantage: ". . . any other method is only demagogic and bourgeois phraseology."[4]

The first work of Benjamin in which the influence of Marxism can be felt is "One-way Street," written between 1923 and 1926, and published in 1928. The change in his way of thinking can be illustrated by a comparison of the first version of the manuscript, written in 1923, and the last one from 1926. In the early version, he writes about the victim of misery:

> He should keep his senses awake for all humiliations inflicted upon him, and should discipline himself until his suffering sets him no longer on the downward course of hatred but on the upward path of prayer.

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The "Marxist" version of 1926 repeats almost the same phrase but ends otherwise: ". . . until his suffering sets him no longer on the downward course of sadness but on the upward path of revolt."[5] In this single phrase is concentrated the entire striking transformation of his political ideas during those two years.

Benjamin's former neo-romantic criticism of progress is now charged with a revolutionary Marxist tension, as in the section of the book called *Fire Alarm*:

> . . . if the abolition of the bourgeoisie is not completed before an almost calculable moment in economic and technical development (a moment signalled by inflation and poison-gas warfare), all is lost. Before the spark reaches the dynamite, the lighted fuse must be cut.

Will the proletariat be able to fulfill this historical task? The survival or destruction of "three thousand years of cultural development" depends on the answer.[6] In opposition to the vulgar evolutionist brand of Marxism, Benjamin does not conceive the proletarian revolution as the "natural" or "inevitable" result of economic and technical progress, but as the critical interruption of an evolution leading to catastrophe.

This critical standpoint explains why Benjamin's Marxism has a peculiarly pessimistic spirit—a revolutionary pessimism which has nothing to do with resigned fatalism. In his 1929 article on surrealism, where he again tries to reconcile anarchism and Marxism, he defines communism as *the organization of pessimism*, adding ironically, "unlimited confidence can be placed only in IG Farben and the peaceful perfectioning of the Luftwaffe."[7] Both institutions were soon (but after his death) to show, beyond his most pessimistic forecasts, the sinister use which could be made of modern technology.

However, 1933 marks the beginning of a short period during which Benjamin seems tempted to adopt some elements of Soviet Marxism, and in particular its "progressive" conception of productive forces. Articles written from 1933 to 1935 containing a very favorable evaluation of technical progress—in particular "Experience and Poverty" (1933), "The Author as Producer" (1934), and to a lesser extent "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

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(1935)—are also those which contain uncritical support of the Soviet model of socialism, whose ideology was at this time (the Five Year Plan) a most industrialist and productivist kind of Marxism. It is necessary to add, however, that these documents are somewhat ambiguous. In "Experience and Poverty" he celebrates the end of traditional culture in modern society as creating a salutary *tabula rasa*, but the concept used to define the new civilization—sober and cold like glass and iron—is frightening, "a new Barbarism." And in relation to the article on the work of art, Gershom Scholem pointed to the deep tension between the first part, which seems to mourn the loss of aura, and the second part which praises cinema as an intrinsically revolutionary medium.

These articles are usually considered to be the most "Marxist" pieces written by Benjamin. In my opinion, however, they are only those that are nearest to the established view of what Marxism is about, accepted by most "orthodox" theoreticians of the communist and social-democratic movements. Benjamin's essays from 1925 to 1933, and later from 1936 to 1940, are also Marxist, but they belong to an original and "heterodox" kind of historical materialism, in conflict with the dominant canons because of its non-evolutionist and non-progressivist view of history.

The end of this period of experimental support for some aspects of Soviet Marxism seems to coincide with the Moscow trials of 1936, which Benjamin viewed with perplexity. During the years 1937 to 1940 he became increasingly critical of Soviet policy, finally settling accounts with Comintern Marxism in the "Theses" of 1940.

The 1937 article on "Edward Fuchs, Collector and Historian" contains a severe criticism of social-democratic ideology, which combined Marxism with positivism, Darwinist evolutionism, and the cult of "progress." Its most serious weakness is that it saw in the development of technology only the progress of natural sciences, never the social regression. It never perceived the danger that the energies produced by technology could serve above all for the technical perfection

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of war. Against the shallow optimism of the pseudo-Marxists, Benjamin opposes his pessimistic-revolutionary perspective, referring to Engels' and Marx's own prognosis of a possible barbaric development of capitalism.[8]

Benjamin's break with the "materialist/progressivist" perspective from 1933 to 1935 is not at all a break with Marxism. The essays of 1936 to 1940 are also Marxist, but constitute a new and original reinterpretation of historical materialism (nourished by Romantic culture and Jewish theology), radically different from the orthodoxy of the Second and Third Internationals. They should be considered as an attempt to deepen and radicalize the opposition between Marxism and bourgeois ideology, to heighten its revolutionary potential and sharpen its critical content. This was also the aim of Benjamin's uncompleted book on the Parisian Arcades (*Passagenwerk*):

> One can perceive as one of the methodological aims of this work to demonstrate the possibility of a historical materialism that has annihilated in itself the idea of progress. Here is precisely where historical materialism has to disassociate itself from bourgeois habits of thought.[9]

Such a program did not aim at some sort of "revision" but rather, as in the case of Karl Korsch's work (*Karl Marx*, 1936, one of Benjamin's major sources), at a return to Marx himself.

One of the critical insights directly inspired by Marx and Engels is Benjamin's analysis of the workers' loss of experience and their transformation into automatons (in the *Passagenwerk* and the Baudelaire essay). He quotes a passage from *Das Kapital* in which the workers are described as having to coordinate their movements "with the uniform continuous movement of an automaton." Benjamin concludes that the proletarian lives in a kind of hell, because his life is eternal repetition of the same. Quoting Engels, Benjamin compares the assembly line worker to Sisyphus.[10]

Benjamin was aware that his interpretation of Marxism had its roots in the Romantic critique of industrial civilization, but he was convinced that the same roots are present in Marx himself, and he found support for this view in Korsch's book. As Benjamin quotes Korsch:

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In the theory of the modern labor movement there has been included . . . also an element of that "sobering" which . . . was proclaimed after the great French Revolution first by the French theoreticians of counter-revolution and then by the German romantics, and which had, particularly through Hegel, a strong influence on Marx.[11]

According to Habermas, there is a contradiction between Benjamin's philosophy of history and historical materialism, Benjamin's supposed mistake having been to try to impose on historical materialism a theory that "takes into account progress not only in the sphere of the productive forces but also in that of domination . . . an anti-evolutionist conception of history."[12]

However, a dialectical and non-evolutionist interpretation of history, taking into account both progress and regression, can find support in several writings by Marx (for instance, his late pieces on Russia). It is true that this interpretation conflicts with the dominant views of historical materialism developed throughout the twentieth century. What Habermas considers to be a mistake is precisely the source of the unique value of Benjamin's Marxism, and of its superiority over "progressivist evolutionism" in understanding a century characterized by the overlapping between modernity and barbarism (as in Auschwitz or Hiroshima).

The most radical formulation of this anti-evolutionist interpretation of historical materialism is of course Benjamin's *Theses on the Concept of History* (1940), where the ideology of progress—also inside the communist movement—is criticized in its philosophical foundations: linear and empty time.

This criticism is inspired by a Messianic conception of time. The question of the relationship between Marxism and Messianism in Benjamin's late writings is of course a most controversial one. Some interpreters explain it in terms of "secularization," others speak of "theologization." During the sharp polemics of the 1960s in Germany, some insisted on the religious dimension, others on Marxist materialism. Benjamin himself referred ironically (in a letter to Scholem) to his

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"Janus face," with the critics looking only at one face while ignoring the other. In order to transcend this kind of polemic, it is useful to recall that the Roman god had two faces but only *one head*; Benjamin's faces are manifestations of one and the same thought which had simultaneously a Messianic and a Marxist expression.

Let us take as an example Thesis I, the famous allegory of the mechanical chess player:

> The story is told of an automaton constructed in such a way that it could play a winning game of chess, answering each move of an opponent with a countermove. A puppet in Turkish attire and with a hookah in its mouth sat before a chessboard placed on a large table. A system of mirrors created the illusion that this table was transparent from all sides. Actually, a little hunchback who was an expert chess player sat inside and guided the puppet's hand by means of strings. One can imagine a philosophical counterpart to this device. The puppet called "historical materialism" is to win all the time. It can easily be a match for anyone if it enlists the services of theology which today, as we know, is wizened and has to keep out of sight.[13]

Two topics are interwoven in this allegory: a critique of the sort of Marxism that understands history as a mechanical process leading *automatically* to the triumph of socialism, and the re-establishment of the explosive "theological" (i.e., Messianic) and revolutionary spirit of historical materialism, which had been reduced to a miserable *automaton* by its epigones.

The articulation between theology and materialism takes a curiously paradoxical form in the allegory. At the beginning, the theological dwarf is presented as the master of the automaton, which he uses as a sort of instrument. However, at the end of Thesis I, it appears clearly that the hunchback is a servant of the automaton. What does this reversal mean? It seems that Benjamin wanted to suggest their dialectical complementarity. Theology and Marxism are each one the master and the servant of the other; they need each other.

One must take seriously the idea according to which theology is "at the service of" historical materialism—a formulation that reverts to the traditional scholastic definition of philosophy as *ancilla theologiae*. Theology, as memory of the

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victims and hope of redemption, is not for Benjamin an end in itself, a mystical contemplation of the divine. It is at the service of the struggle of the oppressed.

A few decades after Benjamin's death, the idea of a theology at the service of the poor in the struggle for their self-liberation, a theology intimately linked with Marxism, comes to life again, but this time in a very different cultural and historical context, the liberationist Christianity of Latin America. But there is a secret affinity between Walter Benjamin and liberation theology.

NOTES

1. Walter Benjamin, "Das Leben der Studenten," 1915, in *Gesammelte Schriften (GS)*, II, 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974), p. 75. All translations unless otherwise indicated are mine.
2. Benjamin, "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," *GS*, II, 1 (1921), p. 191.
3. Benjamin, "Bucher die Liebending geblieben sind," *GS*, III, p. 171.
4. Benjamin, *Briefe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966), p.355.
5. Benjamin, "Einbahnstrasse" (1928) *GS* IV, 1, p. 97 and IV, 2, p. 931.
6. Benjamin, "One-Way Street," in Peter Demetz , ed., *Reflections* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978), p. 84.
7. Benjamin, *GS*, II, 1, p. 308. The chemical trust IG Farben employed forced labor from concentration camps during the Second World War. It also produced the Ziklotron gas used to exterminate the inmates.
8. Benjamin, *GS*, II, 2, pp. 474-75.
9. Benjamin, "Passagenwerk," *GS*, V, 1, p. 574.
10. *GS*, V, 1, pp. 61, 71, 75, 77.
11. *GS*, V, 2, p. 820.
12. Jurgen Habermas, "Bewusstmachende oder rettende Kritik," in Walter Benjamin, *Zur Aktualität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), p. 207.
13. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 253.

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KOREA, CHINA, AND THE UNITED STATES: A LOOK BACK

by HUGH DEANE

The triumph of the Chinese revolution in 1949 secured the Manchurian rear of Kim Il Sung's Democratic People's Republic and brought it the bonanza of scores of thousands of battle-experienced troops. Koreans whom Kim had sent to fight in the Chinese People's Liberation Army against the Kuomintang came home, bringing much equipment, and were integrated into the new northern army.

That year North Korea responded defensively when South Korean troops provocatively crossed the 38th parallel on the Onjin peninsula. But when the south crossed again in the same area in 1950, as substantial evidence indicates, North Korea struck all along the parallel in what turned into an attempt to unite Korea by force. Yet the northern assault of June 25, 1950, did not begin the Korean war. The war started in 1945 and it was begun by the United States.

When the U.S. Twenty-fourth Corps, commanded by General John R. Hodge, landed in Inchon that September, it found in place a thriving Korean People's Republic organized and led by jubilant patriots with a sense of historic mission. The United States responded by allying itself with Korean collaborators, the Japanese trained police, youthful terrorist groups, the dominant landlord class, and returned rightist

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exiles like Syngman Rhee, to bring about the destruction of the People's Republic and its supportive new-born organizations—trade unions, peasant associations, the youth federation, and all sorts of cultural groups. Cruelties beyond count led to the establishment in 1948 of a separatist southern regime headed by Rhee, who began many trips to the podium with promises to invade the north and free its enslaved population.

The official rhetoric and most accounts in the media portrayed the Rhee dictatorship as a praiseworthy young democracy valiantly confronting a despotic Soviet puppet in the north. But the CIA told it broadly as it was in internal documents. It said that South Korean politics were dominated by rightists "who control most of the wealth" and exercise control through the National Police, which, allied with "rightist youth groups," are "ruthlessly brutal in suppressing disorder." The left had been driven underground.

Rhee's abuses and inflammatory rhetoric alarmed and troubled important U.S. officials, largely for pragmatic reasons. Moves to try to shift to a centrist regime were considered and debated. But, as elsewhere, the deterrent was a serious uncertainty, the possibility that centrism might slip over to a left success. The United States clung to Rhee and to the dictatorships that succeeded him.

Still in naval uniform, I was in Seoul briefly in October 1945. General Hodge had recently described Japanese and Koreans as "the same breed of cat." Syngman Rhee arrived on one of MacArthur's planes to be warmly welcomed at a ceremony organized by the United States and its Korean collaborator friends. Rhee was provided with quarters with the generals in the Chosen Hotel, with a huge slush fund and ready access to the radio. I returned for substantial stays in 1947 and 1948. In 1947 I feverishly reported on the destruction of the above-ground left and in 1948, with Pierre Doublet of Agence France Presse, I worked to get at the truth of the farcical election that elevated Rhee to power.

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Left-oriented educated Koreans had been misled into believing that if U.S. correspondents were amply supplied with the facts, they would use them to get the truth out. The result was that hundreds of nocturnal hours were spent in preparing detailed papers on a score of subjects. The English was flawed (a scholar who became a friend spoke Shakespearean English) and some of the facts were hearsay, but they were a powerful, numbing recitation of the brutalities that frustrated the aspirations of a long-suffering people. My copies are among my Korean papers at the University of Chicago.

The left did not succumb easily. The Autumn Harvest Uprisings of 1946 were a surge of bitter anger, ill-organized by the local people's committees of the People's Republic, and savagely crushed. The villages on Cheju island rebelled unitedly in 1948 and killed many police and other tormentors before suppression. The brief Yosu rebellion began with the refusal of constabulary units to go to Cheju on a counterinsurgency mission. The United States commanded the subduing of the rebels—secret protocols gave them covert authority. Retribution was merciless, U.S. intelligence reported. But before the year was over much of the south was engulfed in a guerrilla war that continued diminished in some areas until it linked up with the assaulting northern divisions in 1950. Reporting on the guerrilla war in March 1950, Walter Sullivan of the *New York Times*, the best of the U.S. correspondents, wrote,

> Large sections of South Korea are darkened today by a cloud of terror that is probably unparalleled in the world . . . . Nights in the hundreds of villages across the guerrilla areas are a long, cold vigil of listening.

The number of southern guerrillas killed during the first two months of the war (July and August) was double the number of soldiers from the United States killed in the entire war.

North Korea developed into an independent commandist state. Even in its formative stage it was not a satellite, but in many respects it was modelled on China. Kim Il Sung had been a member of the Chinese Communist Party in his youth and he waged a hard-bitten guerrilla war along the

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Korean-Manchurian border like that characteristic of the Chinese party's struggle for power. A number of Koreans studied under Zhou Enlai and Guo Morou at the Whampoa Academy in Guangzhou and at least one made the Long March. A Korean military-political school was organized at Yanan. As noted, many thousands of Koreans fought in the Chinese civil war, throughout which North Korea was a rest and recuperation area for Chinese troops. A study in late 1949 revealed that of 1,881 "cultural cadres" in North Korea, 422 had experience in China's Eighth Route Army.

But Kim was selective in his emulation of the Chinese. He borrowed heavily from Mao when he made speeches and organized a Koreanized, moderated, Great Leap Forward. But he stayed clear of the Cultural Revolution, which he saw as a threatening alienation of the people. The party he led was named the Workers' Party and in 1975 he took North Korea into the Non-Aligned Movement, in effect into the Third World. His cult matched Mao's (Mao was the Red Sun in Our Hearts, Kim was a Beautiful New Red Star in the Sky). He had Pak Hon-yong, leader of the southern Communists, who was perceived as a rival, executed following concocted charges. Like Chiang Kai-shek, he named his son (Kim Jong Il) as successor.

But the demonization of North Korea is wide of the mark. The regime carried out an effective land reform and was successful in expanding literacy and education generally. It lavished money on cultural opportunities. Industrialization created many thousands of jobs. Many Koreans must have felt stifled by the top-downism and the adulation of the leader but no evidence points to a great loss of popular support.

Two critical differences separate the north and the U.S.-Rhee south. First, in contrast to the Chinese and Korean revolutionary experience of the military in the north, the southern army was commanded by Koreans who had been officers in the Imperial Japanese Army and were proud of it. Some had been in units trying to extirpate Kim's guerrilla force, some were guilty of war crimes in the Philippines and

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China. Secondly, guerrillas were both a historical legacy and a current North Korean asset in both the south and north. Late in 1950 U.S. intelligence counted some 60,000 guerrillas operating nearly as far south as Pusan. The U.S.-Rhee regime, on the other hand, had not the slightest hope of gaining a guerrilla auxiliary and never tried.

Early in the 1950 war MacArthur boasted that with a single division, the First Cavalry, he would quickly have the Reds skedaddling north, but he soon found that division after division had to be committed. After capturing Seoul, the North Korean forces fatally paused a week, apparently to resupply, which enabled MacArthur to reinforce and hold the Pusan perimeter in the southeast. Afterward, MacArthur skillfully executed his Inchon leapfrog. A huge armada (it secretly included a Japanese minesweeper flotilla manned by former Japanese navy personnel) landed a substantial military force at Seoul's port, bringing about the recapture of Seoul, the capital. The northern divisions to the south were more or less cut off and suffered heavy losses.

It was "MacArthur at his finest," many said and indeed it was a brilliant stroke. But overall MacArthur in Korea was at his worst, the victim of his ethnocentric bias, his ignorance of Chinese tactics and strategy, and his reliance on the intelligence provided by the bigoted General Charles Willoughby, "my little fascist," as MacArthur sometimes called him.

Inchon did not turn into a rout. Despite grievous losses in men and material, the Kim Il Sung leadership drew on Chinese experience for the planning of a largely realized strategic retreat to the northern mountains, the fastnesses where Kim's guerrillas had struggled years before. Surviving northern forces in the south, divided into small units with some in peasant clothes, they made their way north even as U.S. and South Korean troops crossed the parallel. The brief defense of Pyongyang permitted the exodus of key personnel and papers, and in the east an effective guerrilla resistance taught the United States that capture or destruction of cities did not assure control of the countryside. More returning

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Koreans from Manchuria joined the regrouping in the mountains.

Week after week Willoughby estimated the North Korean military as a scattered 20,000 incapable of organized resistance. MacArthur, with the acquiescence of the Truman administration, pressed on to the Yalu and "home by Christmas." MacArthur saw the triumph he was certain of as "Mars's last gift to an aged warrior." South Korean officers said they would soon bathe their sabers in the Yalu. The myth is that the force that struck at the U.S. and South Korean divisions in November, and inflicted a humiliating defeat on them, was entirely Chinese. In fact, it was a Sino-Korean force, the Korean divisions by then restored to a strength of about 160,000.

A stalemate developed more or less along the 38th parallel. The U.S. forces, commanded by General Matthew Ridgway after MacArthur's dismissal, were deterred from another drive to the Yalu by the expectation of heavy casualties—100,000 in Ridgway's judgment. And the Sino-Korean side knew that in the unlikely event of a successful deep drive south, the United States might well respond with nuclear bombs. Casualties continued as the wrangling over truce terms (I.F. Stone's account of this is superior) dragged on into 1953.

According to Bruce Cumings, the Chinese army was "the most disciplined and correct" in the war. But atrocities were general. Contrary to the easy assumptions of U.S. scholars and commentators, the U.S.-South Korean record is the worst. That followed from the fact that the north had popular support in the south and waged guerrilla war in both the south and north. Guerrillas are fish swimming in the water of the people, as the Chinese say, and their suppression requires the draining of the water. Both the Rhee regime and the United States emulated the "kill all, burn all" suppression tactics of the Japanese in China. They slaughtered villagers and torched villages, making torture a routine practice. The United States

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was guilty of an atrocity of its own—indiscriminate use of the then new weapon of napalm.

North Korean troops in the south in 1950 killed prisoners in repeated violation of stern high-level orders. In an internal command, not a propaganda concoction, the military leadership ordered that such killings cease. They issued a second reprimand when they did not. Several groups of thirty to forty U.S. prisoners were killed by bullets to the head, such killings taking place after the Inchon landing made taking prisoners north difficult. The northern record of treatment of Rhee officials, landlords, and police is a mix of mercy and extermination.

The northern tanks entering Seoul smashed the gates of the most notorious prison, freeing prisoners who had survived recent mass executions. Acts of vengeance followed but were quickly forbidden. But the north executed some on the eve of being driven from Seoul.

The South Korean handling of prisoners is described in a study by the U.S. Army as "a tendency to mistreat or kill prisoners at the slightest provocation." In one incident Captain Kim Sok-yun, called Tiger Kim, had fifty northern prisoners beheaded. The reaction of the U.S. Army when the Red Cross made inquiries was to worry that correspondents might find out about it.

The U.S. X Corps in eastern North Korea, beset by 20,000 guerrillas, turned sections of the countryside into a sea of fire, killing guerrillas and villagers, and turning others over to the South Koreans for swift dispatch. Estimates of the number of North Koreans executed or turned into roped work gangs by the Rhee forces during their brief stay range up to 150,000.

In one of the worst of the atrocities, women and children in a northern village area were kept in a shed for days without food or water while being interrogated. Then gasoline was poured on the shed and they were roasted. According to evidence gathered by the northern authorities, this was a joint South Korean-U.S. effort.

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Both MacArthur and Ridgway requested consignments of nuclear bombs, and in 1951 in Operation Hudson Harbor raids with dummy bombs were carried out to determine if the real thing could be effective. The conclusion was that their use was impractical for technical reasons. Napalm became the weapon of choice. After the Chinese entered the war, MacArthur ordered that 1,000 square miles of the north be turned into wasteland. Ridgway directed that Pyongyang, the capital, be burned to the ground. From the air, the United States de-urbanized North Korea, making a major contribution to the 20 percent reduction of the northern population.

At a time when many GIs were fretting about the long delay in reaching a truce agreement at Panmunjom, Ridgway and an Eighth Army colonel made headlines with the charge that 6,000 or even 8,000 U.S. prisoners had been murdered by the Communists—many times the earlier estimate of about 400 victims. I.F. Stone devoted two feisty chapters to demolishing what he called "statistical slapstick," but, of course, many more read an editorial in the *New York Times* alleging that the Communists "butchered prisoners in cold blood."

Years later General Willoughby reacted scornfully to all the fuss being made of the Mylay massacre in Vietnam. "In Korea we had Mylay all the time," he said. He was wrong only in that he laid the burden of blame on North Korea.

When I was in Chonju, North Cholla, in August 1947, during a period of repression of leftists, a retired police chief from St. Louis serving in the U.S. Military Government told me that "Orientals are accustomed to brutality such as would disgust a white man." A British cabinet officer who visited the strife-torn prisoner of war camps on Koje explained that Koreans are "prone to violence." Such were the cliches that enabled the United States to feel less uncomfortable and remain silent about the horrors it could not help discovering. Bruce Cumings has conveniently gathered examples of racism current in high places: Hanson Baldwin, military editor of the *New York Times*, likened Koreans to "the hordes of Genghis Khan." He remarked that to the Korean "life is cheap.

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Behind him stand the hordes of Asia. Ahead of him lies the hope of loot." He hoped that "these simple, primitive and barbaric people" would be convinced that the United States was a friend.

MacArthur believed that the Oriental dies stoically because he thinks death is the beginning of life. Dying, he "folds his arms as a dove does its wings." He also said often that Asians respect nothing as much as demonstrations of authority. Ridgway, visiting a POW camp, commented that "these prisoners are in appearance but a shade above a beast." He called them "human canaille." Edgar Johnson, head of the Economic Cooperation Administration in Korea, called the North Koreans "half-crazed automatons" in the orbit of "a monolithic slave-and-master world."

A U.S. soldier who had served in the occupation wrote in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that Korea was peopled by wild men, scoundrels, and semi-barbarians. He cited missionary opinion that too much inbreeding had led to "an arrested mental development."

General Willoughby thought that the worst aspect of the war was that "simple coolies," "half-men with blank faces" were killing highly civilized U.S. high school boys and college graduates.

The prisoner of war issue stalled the truce talks at Panmunjom. The United States decided not to respect Article 118 of the Geneva Convention, which states that all prisoners were to be repatriated when hostilities ended. It had a valid argument. The war involved two Chinas as well two Koreas and clashes in ideology. Some prisoners certainly had reason to fear repatriation. In April 1952 the Communists concurred, agreeing to screening of prisoners.

But the United States wanted much more. It wanted a substitute for the victory it had failed to get on the battlefield—a propaganda triumph in line with the rollback doctrine that was prevailing over mere containment. An enormous number of prisoners were to refuse to go home to the Communist evils awaiting them. That was achieved. Of

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some 122,000 prisoners, only 31,000 chose repatriation. Including thousands who refused to be screened, the number wishing to be homeward bound reached only 70,000. The Communist negotiators were stunned and disbelieving.

The reality is a tale of U.S. criminality. Some eight of the compounds on Koje island were led or controlled by the Communists among the prisoners and refused screening. To gain defectors in the other Chinese compounds, the United States brought in seventy-five persuaders, about sixty of them from Chiang Kai-shek's equivalent of the Gestapo. They were given control of the food supplies. Nocturnal beatings and the killing of the stubborn led to a gratifying number who muttered "Taiwan, Taiwan, Taiwan" when screened. Similarly, to persuade Korean prisoners, the Rhee government sent in representatives of the terrorist youth groups that had battered the South Korean left.

Fragments of the truth about Koje got into the press (I.F. Stone was again helpful) and the United States responded with elaborations of its falsifications. Writers of its public statements, it was later revealed, were instructed not to mention the Taiwan role in the screening or the brutalities in the compounds. The British had misgivings but Winston Churchill said that they had to be "good comrades," both in the "field of action" and "at the council table." But Foreign Minister Anthony Eden joined Krishna Menon of India and Lester Pearson of Canada in an effort to find a somewhat more humane compromise, leaving Dean Acheson scornfully frustrated.

Convinced that any softening of the prisoner issue would mean an ignominious defeat and add to the ammunition of the Republicans, Truman and Acheson held firm. Eventually the Communists faced what amounted to a fait accompli.

The changes since the truce may be summed up as a number of reversals and continuities affecting the whole of Korea. The economic reversal has had broad implications. In the first peaceful years the north set the pace, swiftly repairing the ravaged cities and making record industrial gains. (Chi-

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nese troops stayed on for a period as work gangs.) But excessive self-reliance, exclusion from the global market, and more recently the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fading of Chinese aid, brought about continuing decline.

The south surged economically. The traditional landlord class was succeeded by, and in part transformed into, an aggressive business class allied with a financially generous government. The north helped that change by carrying out land reform during its brief occupation of much of the south that eliminated considerable landlordism. The World Bank advised southern business to heed Ricardo's comparative advantage and concentrate on textiles and the like. But the Korean conglomerates in the making, determined to get into the real game, quickly developed heavy industry and big ticket exports. The steel making complex at Pohang is the world's third largest and reportedly the most cost effective.

China has reversed its policy in part. The long time ally of the north has turned eagerly to Seoul, developing trade and securing huge South Korean investment in the mainland across the Yellow Sea. Beijing has denied the north the substantial credit it needs to alleviate hardship but has opposed the imposition of sanctions on the north and continues to urge reunification.

A continuity is the continued U.S. military presence in South Korea, its prime mission now to keep the peninsula divided and the Seoul regime subordinate. That continuity reinforces another—nationalism, a nationalism deeply offended by a division imposed from abroad and preserved by U.S. intervention in the civil war.

Korea has a sad heritage of weak dynasties that tempted Japanese and Chinese interventions and thirty-five years of Japanese rule. Just when true liberation seemed at hand, Washington and Moscow drew the line along the 38th parallel. That deadly parallel divides some 5 million families and severely inhibits the rise of a strong nation that, in Kim Il Sung's words, "never again need be the plaything of foreign powers."

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The north has always called for reunification. That is what drove its attempt to unite the country by force of arms. In the south, unification and Korea-for-the-Koreans have a history of fervent popular support. "If we Koreans are to prosper, let it be by our own efforts; if we are to suffer, let it be by our own hands," the Princeton-educated, moderate conservative Kim Kyu-sik said at a press conference in 1948, not long before he defected to the north.

Student demonstrations brought down the Rhee travesty in 1960, plaguing the succeeding dictatorships; all shouted for unification even as they denounced domestic injustice. The death of Kim Il Sung again brought demands in Seoul for participation in the memorial services and for real steps toward unity. As in the past the response of the regime was police truncheons.

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REMARKS ON RECEIVING THE NECLC TOM PAINE AWARD

The National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee was founded in 1951 to respond to the legal needs of the McCarthy period repression, when the American Civil Liberties Union had surrendered to the cold war pressures of the time. The Committee has given the Tom Paine Award annually since 1958 in connection with its annual dinner, this year to Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy. Prior award winners have included, among others, I.F. Stone, Bertrand Russell, Justice William Douglas, and the singing group Peter, Paul, and Mary. The comments Harry and Paul gave at the dinner on 3 December 1994 follow:

REMARKS BY HARRY MAGDOFF

Thank you very much indeed for the Tom Paine Award. I feel deeply honored and am especially appreciative that this is tied in with an attempt to revitalize interest in the Economic Bill of Rights proposed by President Franklin Roosevelt in his last State of the Union Message to Congress. A political bill of rights is severely limited in the absence of economic justice.

At the end of the Second World War there was fear of a return to the Great Depression and an intense awareness that plans needed to be laid for government activity to avoid mass unemployment. The idea that measures should be taken to achieve a full-employment economy was on the agenda. One heard such talk in group sessions with Charles Wilson, president of General Electric Company, when he was head of the War Production Board. The Morgan partners issued a letter to their clients discussing the aim of full employment. A larger

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role for government in directing the economy was part of the program of the Committee for Economic Development, a newly formed organization of the more forward-looking sector of the business community. And even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recognized the need for government to play a stabilizing role in the economy.

In January 1945 Senator James Murray of Montana introduced the Full Employment Bill of 1945. The proposed bill proclaimed the right of all Americans able to work and seeking work to useful, regular, and full-time employment. Moreover, the government was to guarantee that right. At the request of some members of Congress a government committee was formed to help during various stages of the drafting and amendment of the bill. I was on that committee as a representative of the Commerce Department. You may be interested to know that Tom Emerson, one of the founders of the NECLC, was also on that committee. Some members of the committee argued strenuously that the guarantee would be meaningless unless the legislation provided teeth for its enforcement. Such proposals were dismissed as politically impractical. Eventually, when the Chamber of Commerce and Congressional committees got through with new drafts, a wholly ineffectual bill was passed. The watered down version wouldn't even use the term "full employment." Instead the goal became "maximum employment," whatever that may mean. And instead of an employment guarantee, reliance was placed in the magic of interest rates and the government budget as trustworthy stimulants of employment opportunities. That kind of tinkering was supposed to keep the ship of state and the economy on an even keel.

Underlying this approach was a myth—a myth that persists to this day, deeply embedded in the consciousness not only of the academic world but in the population at large. It is taken as axiomatic that what is produced will be consumed, and that the profits made will be invested so that, except for a glitch now and then, there will be unending growth and plenty of job opportunities.

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This way of thinking is based on an abstract model of the way the economy is supposed to work. Solutions are sought for an economy that runs primarily on manufacturing industries, where price competition among business firms is rampant and the domestic economy is relatively independent. The first two decades after the Second World War helped to sustain this way of thinking. Indeed, establishment economists are convinced that to them belongs the credit for the smooth course of the postwar wave of prosperity.

They stick to their pride even though for a quarter of a century now the economies of all the advanced industrial countries have been slowing down, with declining growth rates, shrinking investment rates, and a rising trend of unemployment. Despite this reality, the myth of a self-generating textbook economy persists. In fact, though, we are living in a world far removed from the ideal models of economists: not competition, but giant corporations rule the roost; not manufacturing, but trade and finance dominate; not free-flowing investment, but large areas of sluggish investment in the face of mountains of unused capacity; not a national economy, but an international one. By way of illustrating one of the differences between what is and what is assumed to be, note that there are now more people employed in selling goods than there are engaged in producing them.

Despite the persistent slowdown, despite the major changes in the economy, the illusions and myths persist, and the prevailing ideas deal with tinkering, with a search for a panacea. In the 1930s, trust was placed on priming the pump. As the number of people with farm experience have declined, the metaphor has changed to looking for ways to jump start the sluggish economy. But neither pump-priming nor jump-starting led to the fast track that was supposed to produce jobs, homes, and all the goodies. Instead, we live in a country where misery and hunger exist, not because we are basically poor or because of natural disasters; on the contrary, because we are so rich, and dare not touch the sources of personal wealth,

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because we dare not interfere with the market, especially not the financial markets.

The damnedest thing is that the United States is outstanding in its basic ability to attain a decent living for every single one of its people, and much, much more. We have the land, the natural resources, the capital goods—and the ability to make more and more machinery—all that is needed to meet the needs of the people. This is not idle speculation. Think about what happened when this country went to war. The mass unemployment of the Great Depression evaporated overnight. As people began to eat better, the food surpluses of earlier years turned into shortages. Almost overnight an army of 12 million was housed, clothed, and fed; hundreds of thousands and millions of airplanes, artillery, armored vehicles, and other means of warfare were produced for the armed forces, in addition to supplementing the material for the British, Free French, and Soviet armies; moreover, a gigantic merchant ship fleet was created to transport all of this across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Today, our President, Secretary of Labor, and other wise folk worry about a lack of skills in the working class. Why wasn't that an obstacle when we were faced with the complexity and pressure of war? Everyone then knew that women were not suited for machine work: they didn't have the talent, and they didn't like to get dirty. But the jobs were there and the needs urgent, so women became operators of difficult, complex, and greasy machine tools. In short order, callow youngsters in the millions became airplane pilots, navigators, tank drivers, and operators of radar systems and other advanced technical equipment. Early in that war General "Hap" Arnold came to a base in North Africa to award medals to the pilots of an exceptionally heroic and able air wing. The pilots who lined up for the award ceremony wore their uniforms sloppily and stood in slovenly fashion, except for one youngster. A happy and grinning general asked this paragon of military posture what he had done before becoming a pilot. "I was an usher at Roxy's," was the reply.

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Contrast the human and production achievements during the war period with what goes on today: nonsensical and ignorant debates about budget deficits, competitive ability, slow productivity growth, insufficient savings, lack of skilled labor, etc. All these delusions divert attention from the essential truth that ample resources are available to construct homes, schools, child-care centers, recreation and cultural centers for the youth, improve the environment, create breathable air, and opportunities for improvement in the quality of life, including large doses of leisure. There is enough useful work to be done to fully occupy those willing and able to work. And surely there is enough potential competence to supply teachers, medical workers, musicians, foresters, technicians, and much more.

The contrast between the reigning theories and the economic potential illustrates why it is so important to bring to the fore the Economic Bill of Rights. It is time to recognize that the search for a magic pill which will rejuvenate a sick society is a trap. The terrain of struggle should be shifted from the useless games of the economists and pundits to a straightforward demand for economic as well as civil rights. In turning from patchwork thinking to the fundamental issues of morality and right, we find that the educators themselves need to be educated.

We are living in mean-spirited times, times when the irrational is on the rise. To deal with the problems facing society, we need a powerful moral substitute for war. And we need a powerful peoples' movement to bring about a mobilization of resources and their redirection for the betterment of the human condition rather than for the destruction of war. Yes, as did Tom Paine, we need to seek a new age of reason. Not that alone, however. For we also need a new age of humanity.

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REMARKS BY PAUL SWEEZY

When Edith told me that Harry and I were to be recipients of Tom Paine Awards, I was not only gratified and honored; I was also motivated to learn more about Tom Paine. So I read what I believe is the most recent biography of Tom Paine, entitled *Thomas Paine* and authored by the English philosopher A.J. Ayer. It is a very good book which I strongly recommend. What I learned about Tom Paine was that he was a revolutionary not only in the sense of favoring American independence from Britain, but also in a sense that most of our founding fathers definitely were not. He was a real radical who believed in the potential of the common people to govern themselves in a democracy spelled with a small "d." He was pretty much what I like to think I would have been if I had lived two centuries ago. And I also like to think that if he were alive today he would have been as much opposed to monopoly corporate capitalism as I am. In short, what I learned about Tom Paine made me happy and proud to receive an award in his name.

A few years before his death in 1809, Paine summed up his life's work in the following words: "My motive and object in all my political works, beginning with *Common Sense,* the first work I ever published, have been to rescue man from tyranny and false systems and false principles of government, and enable him to be free." I cannot think of a better definition of what has been called in our time a "public intellectual"—an honorable calling of which he was assuredly the most successful practitioner in all U.S. history. By a common consensus of contemporaries and later historians, Paine's influence was crucial in building popular support for the Declaration of Independence and the Revolution that followed.

Let me suggest that what we desperately need today is new Tom Paines, public intellectuals who will use their knowledge and learning to explain to a confused and frustrated public the real causes of their discontent. The underlying

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problems are in one sense what they were in Paine's time—a false system and false principle of government— though the specifics of course have greatly changed in the intervening two centuries.

The false system is that which unashamedly enthrones private profit and wealth as the supreme values to which all else must be subordinated.

The false principle of government is that which derides, denigrates, and proscribes collective action to achieve lofty goals which are well within our reach and power but which happen to be in contradiction with the system's supreme values.

Let me conclude with a question, only partly rhetorical I hope: where are the Tom Paines who will devote their lives, as he did, to rescuing us from the false gods that hold us in thrall?

(*Continued from inside back cover*)

We would like to remind teachers—both in college and elsewhere—that copies of the special November issue of *MR*, dealing with the work of Harry Braverman, are still available and may be ordered at bulk-discount rates (see ad on page 47). The same rates also apply to other back issues of *MR* while they last.

Particularly valuable for classes or study groups are the two *MR* pamphlets listed in the ad. Harry Magdoff's *Globalization: To What End?* provides a concise explanation of the background to current controversies over such issues as economic growth, job dislocation, privatization, and free-trade agreements. John Bellamy Foster's *The Limits of Environmentalism Without Class* places the political struggles between environmentalists and growth-advocates in the Pacific Northwest in the wider context of a system that routinely falsifies the real choices imposed by the needs of nature and of people. Both works are written in an accessible style that is ideal for students.

We are now finalizing arrangements for a Monthly Review Tour to Vietnam, with an optional four-day trip to Angkor Wat via Phnom Penh. The trip will leave November 29 and return on December 12. If you are interested, write to Monthly Review—Vietnam Winter Tour, 122 West 27th St., New York, NY 10001.

Readers in the New York area should be interested to know that Leo Panitch, editor of the *Socialist Register*, will be giving a lecture at the Marxist School on Friday, February 17, and a seminar on Saturday, February 18. He will discuss efforts by social movements to mobilize against the logic of competitiveness and profit on the national and municipal levels. Those interested should call (212) 242-4201.

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The Political Is Personal

by Annette T. Rubinstein

Nelson Peery, *Black Fire: The Making of an American Revolutionary.* New York: The New Press, 1994, 340 pp. $22.95.

Peery begins: "This book was started shortly after World War II. I was twenty-four and could still remember. When I became old enough to be honest with myself and the typewriter I finished the work."

It is a measure of its excellence that the book does not feel finished. That it falls into three, or even four, disparate parts detracts neither from its interest nor its verisimilitude. Living and growing, one man in his time may live many lives and an autobiographer may be no more able than any other historian to account fully for each transformation.

The first section, describing an almost unique childhood as part of the only black family in a small midwestern town—Wabasha, Minnesota—is a gem. One would not wish to add or subtract a single word here.

The family move to Minneapolis, the boy's more familiar adventures in school, with the gang, with girls, occasional brushes with an unfriendly white world and the fortunate encounter with a radical young teacher, Meridel Le Sueur, are rapidly telescoped. We would like to know more of two things here lightly touched on. One is a number of apparently casual contacts with a Young Communist League club, contacts only mentioned here but apparently remembered years later in some vivid, though unreported, detail. The other is the gradual defeat and disintegration of the once proud,

Annette T. Rubinstein is a political activist and the author of *Great Tradition in English Literature,* and *American Literature: Root and Flower.*

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loving, beloved father. Consciously or unconsciously, the young man averts his eyes from his valiant mother's struggle with increasing poverty and his father's increasing abdication of responsibility as more of his civil service wages are spent on drink to dull the rage and hurt of promotions blocked and an earned career denied.

Peery's eighteenth birthday is marked by an intense if brief inter-racial love affair and a successful application to the Civilian Military Training Camp. There he "would learn strategy and tactics . . . how to shoot a machine gun and fire a mortar. When the war came here, if the bell should toll, it would not toll for me. . . . I didn't know much about the revolution but I did know we were leading the fight here, because our fight for equality was against the Fascists."

After successfully completing a month of training, the young man, distraught by a letter informing him of his sweetheart's pregnancy, sends her his discharge pay and writes he is going west to seek his fortune—that is, a job to enable them to marry. What follows is a closely packed series of adventures on the road in a number of hobo jungles, ending with a return to the family, a farewell to his sweetheart (who has apparently had an abortion), and enlistment in the wartime army. Despite the breathless pace of this short section, there is no feeling of a bald summary. Each event stands out vividly in memory with very little attempt at interpretation or judgment.

This approach changes drastically in Part II, which begins with an analytic account of his black regiment, part of the 93rd Division. Here we meet as individuals a surprising number of Peery's comrades. Differing sharply from each other, they are nevertheless all deeply united by their reaction to systematic injustices and their interaction with the black community in Louisiana where they are soon stationed. The poor farmers' pride and love for these armed uniformed brothers, the Klan's fury brutally vented on the helpless unarmed civilians, the soldiers' barely restrained violent retribution remind us of parallel experiences described in John Killens' powerful novel, *And Then We Heard the Thunder*, and lose nothing in the comparison.

The last section of the book deals with combat in the Pacific and the author's deep involvement with the desperate underground war of the Huks against the U.S. occupiers who, like Chiang Kai Shek's forces in China, were finally more concerned to destroy their radical compatriots than the Japanese. In an atypical editorial passage Peery explodes:

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If the Americans had never committed genocide against the Indians; if they had never incited wars of annihilation between the native peoples of the land, if there had never been a Trail of Tears; if America had never organized and commercialized the kidnapping and sale into slavery of a gentle and defenseless African people; if it had never developed the most widespread, brutal, exploitative system of slavery the world has ever known; if it had never held carnivals of torture and lynching of its black people; if it had never sundered and torn and ground Mexico into the dust; if it had never attacked gallant, defenseless Puerto Rico and never turned that lovely land into a cesspool to compete with the cesspool it had created in Panama; if it had never bled Latin America of her wealth and had never cast her exhausted people onto the dung heap of disease and ignorance and starvation; if it had never pushed Hiroshima and Nagasaki into the jaws of hell—if America had never done any of these things—history would still create a special bar of judgment for what the American people did to the Philippines.

This white hot anger surpassed even the fury revealed in the author's detailing of the horrors suffered by the peaceful black community in Louisiana through the organized bestiality of the Klan and its military accomplices. This helps us understand his tremendous sense of loss at parting with his Philippine comrades, a loss soon echoed in his disorientation at the final break-up of the regiment.

Although there is then no explanation offered for a near suicide by the returning bemedalled neighborhood hero, there is really none needed. Here we truly realize how completely the political is personal. What is needed is a sequel to tell us what came of his closing determination to "go see Meridel Le Sueur, use the GI Bill of Rights, and learn to fight another way."

EZLN military head "Insurgent Sub-Commander Marcos" took time off to write the press a letter denying government charges that his army's second offensive, on December 19, had caused the peso devaluation: "I solemnly promise to convert my bank account not to dollars . . . but to *marcos*."—Nicaragua Solidarity Network's *Weekly News Update*, January 8, 1995.

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THE DISCIPLINE OF DESIRE

John Rule and Robert Malcolmson, eds., *Protest and Survival: Essays for E. P. Thompson.* New York: The New Press, 1993, $30.00.

by Michael Merrill

E. P. Thompson inspired people. But he also shocked them. Thompson himself thought the shock often due to his own awkwardness, which marked him as an "alien" even in England. To be a socialist, he said, required attending a "school of awkwardness," and led to a knobbly sensibility, "all knees and elbows." But there was more to it than that. When introducing Thompson to a large disarmament gathering in the early 1980s at New York City's Riverside Church, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin recalled how he had first learned of him. "I saw this man on television," he reported, "the very image of madness, who was repeatedly tousling his white hair and bobbing up and down while talking in what seemed like several voices." "Then," Coffin concluded,

> I began to listen to his words, and it was not madness that I heard but sanity, the very soul of reason. For here was this man, this apparently crazy person, calling on me and everyone else within earshot to declare our opposition, once and for all, to the real, the institutionalized madness of the arms race and Mutually Assured Destruction. Who is this man, I wanted to know?

Michael Merril teaches at Rutgers Labor Education Center. He edited the *Labor Party Advocate* newsletter from 1990 to 1992, and is the author of *Revolutionary America: Agrarianism and Equal Rights in the Early Republic*, forthcoming from Cornell University Press.

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I heard that Louis Althusser asked the same question when shown "The Poverty of Theory or, An Orrery of Errors" published in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press, 1978), Thompson's spirited denunciation of the Althusserian influence on the intellectual left. And I remember thinking that many of the young writers listening in the mid-1980s to Thompson's homage to his friend, the American poet Tom McGrath, were probably wondering about the speaker, the historian with a poet's sensibility, who went on for so long, about so many different things, with such passion and conviction, to the rapt attention of the entire audience.

Among historians and scholars, of course, Thompson was best known as the author of *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), as well as essays on "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," "The Moral Economy of the Crowd," and other studies of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English social history. People who know these sorts of things report that he was one of the ten most cited humanities scholars of the last twenty-five years, ranking right up there with Michel Foucault and Claude Levi-Strauss, and the most cited historian. Despite his intellectual impact, however, and probably because of his lifelong self-identification as a revolutionary, a democrat, and a "small 'c' communist," the academic guild largely withheld its approval. Thompson's first book on William Morris received a solitary review in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which attacked its "ideological bias" and "mood of ill-temper." A few years later, *The Making of the English Working Class* received more praise, but still raised the hackles on many a reviewer's neck. Gertrude Himmelfarb in *The New Republic*, for example, thought Thompson not simply *engagé* but positively *enragé*, and a review in the English journal *History* found much of the book "sheer fantasy."

Most Americans and Britons, however, knew nothing of these quarrels. They thought of Thompson as a peace activist not as an historian; and in Great Britain, at least, when the peace movement was at its peak during the early to mid-1980s, he was one the "most admired" people in the country, trailing only Margaret Thatcher, Queen Elizabeth, and the Queen Mother in the mass media admiration polls. Even as an activist, though, Thompson remained the historian. For example, at a disarmament rally of 250,000 people in Trafalgar Square, as Brian Palmer tells the story,

> he waited for the crowd to quiet and, then, into the hush of thousands he spoke the politics of a past he had long labored to translate to the present: "Against the kingdom of the beast, wee witnesses do rise." One protester,

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confused as to the meaning and ancestry of this obviously antiquated language, uttered a quizzical, "Say what?" To which his companion, irritated, replied, "Blake, you idiot. William Blake."

Of course, as Palmer points out, it wasn't Blake at all, but a line from the marching song of Oliver Cromwell's "New Model Army":

> For God begins to honour us,
> The Saintes are marching on;
> The sword is sharp, the arrows swift
> To destroy Babylon.
> Against the kingdome of the beast
> Wee witnesses do rise . . .

Nevertheless, the lineage was clear and the tradition thus renewed. The origins of Thompson's sensibility can be traced to his parents' home at Boar's Hill, Oxford, where he was born in 1924. His father, Edward John Thompson, was the son of Methodist missionaries working in southern India, where he served as missionary himself until being appointed a lecturer in Bengali at Oxford in the early 1920s. The elder Thompson taught there with great distinction for two decades, publishing an astonishing number and variety of books before his death in 1946. E. P.'s mother, the American Theodosia Jessup, was also a missionary, raised in the Middle East, whose great-grandfather had chaired the platform committee of the 1860 Republican Party convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln. Both his parents were tough-minded liberal critics of imperialism, and they provided the younger Thompson and his older brother Frank (killed on a mission to aid anti-fascist Bulgarian partisans behind enemy lines during the Second World War) with a childhood punctuated by a constant flow of stimulating visitors, from English poets laureate to Indian writers and nationalist politicians. Jawaharlal Nehru, Palmer suggests, helped school the young Edward in his cricket batting technique.

Equally telling to Thompson's own making was his seventeen years as a tutor in English and social history with the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Leeds. He recalled going into adult education because "it seemed to me to be an area in which I could learn something about industrial England, and teach people who would teach me." Which they did. "Extra-mural tutors," he argued, "had to be willing to have 'hitherto accepted' academic judgements corrected in the light of the student's experience." At the same time, they could not abandon their teaching in the face of the "over-simplifications or distortions liable to arise from the limitations of this experience." Tutors ought not to permit "social

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purposiveness to replace study, desire to master discipline." In the healthy tutorial, therefore, a struggle constantly took place "between the scholarship of the tutor and the social dynamic of the movement." *The Making of the English Working Class* was born of this struggle. Years later Peter Thornton, one of Thompson's students, recalled that his classes made you realize "that history wasn't something separate and apart; it was a progression that you were a part of. . . . And when he did things like the handloom weavers of Yorkshire, the Luddites, the social developments of the Industrial Revolution in this part of the world, you very quickly realized how much you and your people were part of it." Dorothy Greenald, to whom (together with her husband) *The Making of the English Working Class* was dedicated, had a similar experience. Edward Thompson "brought it out that your background wasn't anything to be ashamed of." "The warmth and affection past students still have for him," she felt, "is not because of what he has become, but for what he was as a friend and tutor, happy, friendly, and helpful, who treated all students as equals."

Thompson had an equally profound impact on his research students, some of whom have now issued this collection of essays in his honor, *Protest and Survival* (the title refers directly to Thompson's edited collection *Protest and Survive* which called for an end to the nuclear arms race and was published in the United States by Monthly Review Press). As Peter Searby, John Rule, and Robert Malcolmson observe:

> Studying with Edward Thompson made for some intense experiences. The writing of history was for him a serious and demanding vocation, not to be confused with the limiting notions of a career, with its various symbols of status and advancement. Writing history was a life-enhancing activity. It was done with a deep sense of commitment. It involved a rigorous apprenticeship in method, criticism, craftsmanship, and a study of sources. Good social history—"probing history, attentive history, scrupulously researched history"—was vital to the health of society. His research students felt strongly that they were embarking on intellectual missions of importance. This is a daunting standard. But by all accounts Thompson lavished an extraordinary degree of care and concern upon his students in order to help them live up to it.

As the essays in *Protest and Survival* evidence, he did his job well. Collections like this are inevitably something of a grab bag, especially when the occasion for the collecting is to honor a teacher as protean and as democratic as Edward Thompson. The contributions here range from J. M. Neeson's article on historians' treatment

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of the peasantry to Robert Malcolmson's discussion of the origins and consequences of the decision of U.S. military strategists to rely upon a massive nuclear arsenal (ultimately numbering 25,000 to 30,000 warheads) to deter aggression after the Second World War. In between are essays on the opposition to the death penalty in late eighteenth-century England; the influence of radical Jacobinism on English trade unionism in the 1790s; William Blake's relationship to the Swedenborgian New Church at Great Eastcheap; the connections between the struggle against slavery by Afro-Americans (both freed and enslaved) and the struggle against capitalist expropriation and exploitation by English workers; upper-class fears of a "criminal class" in Victorian England; a local history of the pull of "socialism" as the foundation of "the entire regeneration of society in art, in science, in religions and in literature" during the 1870s and 1880s; the electoral successes of an early labor-led coalition of socialists in the industrial London suburb of West Ham; the antiwar and increasingly socialist agitation of the English suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst during the First World War; and a history of the great New York harbor strike of 1919 "from the bottom up." In addition, the collection is fronted by a moving essay on "Edward Thompson as a Teacher: Yorkshire and Warwick" and concludes with a select bibliography of E.P. Thompson's published writings.

There is much that could be said about each of these contributions. My own particular favorites are Douglas Hay's account of eccentric Lord George Gordon's campaign against the death penalty, which for a time threatened to undermine the "foundation of terror" upon which the English government was erected during the eighteenth century; and Peter Linebaugh's depiction of the world of Robert Wedderburn, the son of a Jamaican slave, who in 1817 published six issues of a newspaper entitled *The Axe Laid to the Root, or a Fatal Blow to Oppressors, Being an Address to the Planters and Negroes of the Island of Jamaica,* which called not only or the abolition of slavery but also for the confiscation and redistribution of plantation property. But it is best to leave the last word to the contributors themselves:

> We came from different backgrounds, had different casts of mind, and have developed in different not always predictable directions. But there is among us a common sense of intellectual and personal indebtedness; a common sense of good fortune to have been able to work with an historian of such creative powers; and a common desire to offer some suitable expression of our respect and affection. *Protest and Survival* is both a reflection of the breadth of Edward Thompson's interests and testimony to the many corners he has brightened. It is also a token of our appreciation for the

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importance he attached to teaching and the skill and sensitivity he brought to it. His career as a university teacher, as conventionally defined, was short but impressive, and we who were part of his circle of enquiry wish to acknowledge the impact of his deeds, his words, and his kindnesses.

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The Marxian Dialectic

by James Lawler

Bertell Ollman, *Dialectical Investigations* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 191, $14.95.

In the Preface to the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx wrote that for the analysis of economic forms "the force of abstraction" must take the place of the microscopes and chemical reagents that are essential instruments for the study of the biological organisms. Bertell Ollman's latest book contains an absorbing account of just what such a force of abstraction meant for Marx. Ollman has been a major defender of the specifically dialectical character of Marxism since his first book, *Alienation: Marx's Concept of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1971). Marx's own work contains a wealth of particular illustrations of dialectical method, from which Ollman draws widely, but is scanty in theoretically explicit texts. For this theoretical level of understanding Ollman acknowledges his debt to Hegel as well as to Hegelians such as F. H. Bradley.

What emerges in Ollman's central essay on dialectical abstraction is the "exemplary flexibility" of Marx's methodology. Against one-sided absolutizations of aspects of Marx's thought, as well as against "refutations" based on seeming contradictions and inconsistencies, Ollman demonstrates the great variety and complexity of Marx's intellectual tools, while showing that this complexity is unified within a coherent dialectical framework. In this book, Ollman has added substantially to his steady campaign over the years against

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a Marxism without dialectics, a stew served up by an increasing number of Marx's academic followers. Rather than a merely radical thinker who abhors capitalism and exposes its multifarious deficiencies, a dialectical Marx is also a scientific thinker who offers the means to explain a dynamic, ever-moving social system and in the process of explanation points to the ways of its revolutionary transformation. At this time of abrupt, disorienting historical changes, Ollman stands for the recovery of the living, dialectical character of Marx's thought from the museum of disconnected "theses" to which it has been disassembled, often by would-be sympathizers.

There are two parts to the examination of dialectical thinking, an "Introduction to Dialectics" that is pedagogically designed for the beginner, and a more challenging section on "Advanced Dialectics." The third section, "Dialectical Investigations," shows in detail how dialectical methodology can be applied to the study of a variety of specific topics: the theory of the state, the nature of the U.S. Constitution, the connection between "academic freedom" and academic repression, Soviet Perestroika, and the study of class consciousness. This third section also contains a compelling analysis of the dialectical methodology of "Studying History Backward" that prolongs the first, methodological part of this work. In evaluating the scope of what is achieved here, it is important to note that this is the "opening salvo" of a more comprehensive study which will include three more volumes.

In this work Ollman further develops the conception of dialectics first presented in his book *Alienation.* The central idea defended there is that dialectical thinking involves an understanding of the systematic interconnectedness of things (internal relations) that change and develop over time. This idea is here presented briefly in an introductory chapter. Classical dialectical concepts of identity and difference, interpenetration of opposites, quantity and quality, and contradiction, involve specific kinds of complex relations. These concepts are succinctly explained and provided with clear illustrations in a lucid chapter that is pedagogically designed for the beginner. But for anyone familiar with texts on dialectics, Ollman's presentation and interpretation is always fresh and insightful. Teachers looking for textbooks on social science methodology, with a dialectical slant and containing pertinent and extensively developed applications, could not find a more accessible work for both undergraduate and graduate level instruction.

In the second section on "advanced dialectics," the question is "what is abstraction?" The qualities of objects that immediately

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impinge on our senses are insufficient for determining the nature of those objects. An active, socially and individually constructed process of drawing the boundaries of objects is necessary to understand the world. This active process of creating conceptual boundaries is what Ollman understands by abstraction. Non-dialectical thinking tends to organize abstractions around the model of separate, externally related things. By contrast, dialectical abstraction expands the conceptual horizon of what is real beyond the individual entities that we directly perceive. Dialectical abstraction includes in the understanding of objects longer temporal processes and wider "internal relations" (or interactions) whereby individual entities are constituted.

These larger spatio-temporal boundaries of the real that underlie dialectical abstraction require a rethinking of the ordinary categories of common-sense, non-dialectical abstraction. To give an example illustrating the dialectical categories of identity and difference: while non-dialectical thinking opposes the identity of a sensually observable thing of a certain type to its differences from other kinds of things, dialectical thinking looks for the identity among the different things or types of things.

For example, Marx's broader dialectical abstraction brings out the identity of instances of surplus value that he uncovers in the perceptually different forms of profit, rent, and interest. In this way of abstracting boundaries there is a stretching of what constitutes the essence of the phenomena that perceptually strike us as simply a variety of different things. To see interest as a form of the surplus value arising from the labor process is to make connections that ordinarily escape non-dialectical thinking. Moreover, from the vantage point of dialectical abstraction, it is possible to detect ideological abstractions that distort our understanding of reality while drawing plausibility from the seeming evidences of the senses. Money seems to produces money (interest) without any apparent connection (relation) to the labor process. Dialectical abstraction is needed to draw the connection between the interest-earning characteristic of money and the labor process, which is at the origin of surplus value and its different forms, including interest. These perceptually dissimilar things, labor and interest, are joined in one essential "identity" in a spatio-temporal, relational process, with mediating links connecting its various "forms" (a structural or relational term) and "moments" (a temporal, process term). In this way of abstracting boundaries there is a broader grasp of what constitutes the reality, the "essence" of the "phenomena," that may

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otherwise strike us as simply a variety of different things that are externally connected by their similarity or "family resemblances."

The identity of things includes not only externally different entities, but also opposing or contradictory social-psychological perspectives. A machine has one identity for a capitalist, who sees it as a commodity and a source of profit, and another to the worker, from whose "vantage point" it is an instrument in the production process. While non-dialectical thinkers would tend to see the machine as an independent entity, only externally related to its owner or its user, dialectical thinkers see its "identity" constituted through social relations that are opposite and even contradictory. The classical dialectical notion of "interpenetration of opposites" is in this way interestingly connected with the perspectival nature of social relations.

The capitalist system as a whole is "identified" by a large-scale abstraction covering a complex set of relations developing over a period of five hundred years, in which means of production, capitalists, workers, value, commodities, money, etc. are interacting forms of an essential identity. Its emergence out of feudal elements and the emergence of elements leading to a fundamentally new social totality are all inherent in the concept capitalism, as this is dialectically abstracted by Marx.

The most intriguing feature of Ollman's argument is his connection of traditional dialectical notions with his idea of three different modes of abstraction: extension, generality and vantage point. The abstraction of extension we have just seen in the way in which "capitalism" has been identified. Capitalism is an abstraction with a spatio-temporal extension of five hundred years, in which time the entire planet has eventually been encompassed. I have mentioned "vantage point" or perspective earlier in connection with "interpenetration of opposites." The capitalist tends to see things from the vantage point of circulation, where materials, tools and labor are bought and products sold for a profit on initial investment. The worker is more prone to see things from the vantage point of the production process, which turns out to provide a crucial perspective for understanding the nature of the system.

Ollman distinguishes seven levels of generality, beginning with the narrowest level, that of the unique individual, and proceeding through the broadest level of generality in terms of which an object can be studied—its physical being. Between these extremes, it is possible to distinguish the additional levels characterizing people in "modern capitalism," in capitalism in general, in class society, as

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simply human, or as members of the animal world. The ideological abstractions characteristic of capitalism typically miss the middle levels of abstraction dealing with class society in general and capitalism in particular. Instead there is a kind of oscillation between the narrowest level of unique individuality and the broader level of humanity in general. Critics of Marxism often fail to recognize the level of generality on which Marx's abstractions are operating. Critiques of Marx's labor theory of value focus on difficulties connected with deducing individual prices from individual amounts of labor. The level of generality which this criticism supposes is that of individuality, whereas Marx is primarily not concerned with "why a particular product costs such and such, but why it costs anything at all." It is at the level of capitalism as a whole that this latter question is posed, while to answer the former it is necessary to introduce narrower levels of generality, proceeding through the functioning of distinctly modern capitalism and approximating to the individual instance. Similarly, it is often said that Marx's class theory of history neglects important alternative or additional factors such as gender and race. But this criticism fails to recognize that these categories occupy different levels of generality, and so do not compete with class identity as ways of identifying individuals. One might argue with as little justification that Marx's class theory of history neglects the importance of physiology or physics.

Ollman himself attempts to make some of these connections between the larger and the more specific levels of generality in the various "dialectical investigations" that constitute the final section of his book. By the use of footnotes he refers the reader to the earlier expositions of the dialectical concepts that are put to work in the particular studies that give a concrete content to this book. Readers may be especially interested in Ollman's analysis of Soviet Perestroika. The essay was originally delivered as a lecture in Moscow in 1990, when Gorbachev's reforms had the goal of reconstructing socialist society. The "discipline of the capitalist market place," Ollman thinks, was mistakenly introduced to stimulate lagging labor productivity. This approach leads inevitably to the overthrow of socialism rather than its reform, because "when it comes to the market one cannot be partly pregnant." Were the Soviet authorities interested in real reform, they would have addressed the underlying paternalistic structure of power—the general essence that constituted the historical identity of the Soviet system from its inception. Ollman calls this system of rule "the regency of the proletariat," inasmuch as the regent rules during the minority of the monarch.

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The Communist Party has played the role of "regent" for the allegedly true rulers, the proletariat, who were kept in an indefinite state of minority. Decline in labor productivity stemmed from the fact that workers refused to acquiesce forever in this role. Use of the market to discipline workers prolongs this form of rule by concealing and mystifying it. Market pressures conceal real sources of power, just as Western-style elections hide real power relations behind a supposedly democratically involved public. Based on this analysis, Ollman accurately predicted the failure of Gorbachev's reforms that occurred a year after his lecture.

But is a market inevitably a capitalist market, as Ollman suggests? The abstraction of extension covered by the concept of the market surpasses by far the historical period of capitalism. A workers' government perhaps might be able to ensure that the vantage point of workers, rather than that of managers or government officials or private owners, prevails in a new socialist type of production for exchange. Worker-owners producing for a consciously regulated, socialized market would, as Ollman himself suggests, be less taken in by the vantage point of circulation and more concerned with conditions of production. The capitalist market, dialectically considered, does not in fact only reproduce capitalism. It is pregnant with the post-capitalist, communist society, whose initial phase is still stamped with features of its parentage. The dialectics of the transition from one system to another must allow for internal connections here too.

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Standing Up to the New Leviathan

by James Devine

Arjun Makhijani, *From Global Capitalism to Economic Justice: An Inquiry into the Elimination of Systemic Poverty, Violence and Environmental Destruction in the World Economy* (New York: The Apex Press, the Council of International and Public Affairs), 1992, No index; no bibliography.

How can or should we respond to the mean new world of hypermobile capital seeking cheap labor and zero environmental and consumerist restrictions? Some, such as Robert Ross and Kent Trachte, declare a new stage of capitalism, succeeding monopoly capitalism. Whether we are in a new stage or not, this "New Leviathan" pushes us to change our perspectives and practices. Many liberals such as U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich have abandoned New Deal principles in favor of catering to multinational capital in the hope that benefits will trickle down to the nation. Many in the labor movement and on the left in the core countries have been discouraged by the seeming ability of quicksilver capital to avoid and undermine even the smallest of reforms. Arjun Makhijani eschews these nationalist, apologetic, and defeatist visions and proposes another path to transform capitalism for the benefit of the Third World and even the First, while severely limiting the power of global corporations.

To Makhijani, our world is a system of "global apartheid," a "war system" that is inherently violent, greedy, and undemocratic. Rejecting bizarre notions like the claim that capitalism has won, he presents a critique of the racist, sexist, and ecologically destructive

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elements of the status quo, without getting trapped in statism or apology for the former Soviet-style economies. With its popular style and many examples, this is an excellent book for left-leaning readers and study groups to discuss. Makhijani has a moral vision that is not moralistic: immorality (world apartheid) is structural and has objective effects in encouraging rebellion and repression. In this vein, I especially liked his clear opposition to "taxation without representation," whether it be economic or political exploitation.

More novel to readers of *Monthly Review* will be his proposals about what to do about global apartheid. In line with many "third path" proposals, from Gandhi to Schumacher, Makhijani favors local self-reliance based on petty private property and democracy. But going beyond many or most of these proposals, he has an international vision of a peace system to facilitate local control. He proposes to break down international boundaries, allowing labor to be more mobile than capital across borders, and to create a United Nations Security Force (implying a democratic world government). These are not as utopian as they seem, but are rather long-term goals: they are linked very clearly to actual grassroots struggles such as restructuring efforts in Kerala, India, and harbingers of hope, international solidarity efforts from below.

To the extent to which there is a centerpiece in this book, it is Makhijani's proposal for a new international monetary system (discussed twice, with an appendix written with Robert S. Browne). It goes beyond proposals to reform or abolish the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (and their regressive and repressive policies), to advocate changing the fundamental monetary mechanism of world trade. In some ways, Makhijani's system is akin to Keynes' proposal at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference to establish an international currency (bancor) instead of the U.S. dollar-based system that prevailed after the Second World War.

Makhijani's proposal centers on the fact that Third World currencies are typically undervalued relative to their purchasing power parity (PPP), though he does not explain it quite this way. For example, PPP theory says that in the long run, the price of similar products in New York and Mexico City will be similar when measured in a common currency; thus the exchange rate should reflect the relative prices of products priced in the respective currencies. But if we are to believe the World Bank's *World Development Report 1994,* the Mexican peso was only about 46 percent of its PPP value in 1992. To Makhijani, this phenomenon reflects the "inequitable structure of the International Monetary System," which creates

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an artificial abundance of Third World currencies, keeping exchange rates down. Structural problems include the Third World's persistently poor terms of trade, dependence on export earnings, and insecurity of the rich, which encourages them to convert their winnings into hard currency. In the proposed system, exchange rates would be set following PPP, using baskets of "basic" commodities purchased by working people, for example, "one traditionally desirable, 1000-calorie meal served in a restaurant." In the system, trading of currencies would not be allowed except though a new international banking authority, while exchange rates between a local currency and the world money would change with the country's inflation rate. Commodity stocks (rather than currency reserves) would be kept to guarantee balance of payments.

Rather than go further in to the details and the "number of technical problems [to] be worked out," it is best to draw out the implications of such a scheme. Recently, the IMF started reporting different countries' Gross Domestic Products using PPP-determined exchange rates. This is a total sham, since nations do not buy products or pay debts at this type of exchange rate. Makhijani's plan would set up institutions to make this illusion real, raising the real purchasing power of Third World countries. For example, given the 1992 numbers in the World Development Report, Mexico's per capita income might rise from $3,470 to $7,490 (almost 33.3 percent of the U.S. level) and China's might soar from $470 to $1,910 (9 percent of the U.S. level). The increased exchange rate would make Third World labor more expensive and would discourage multinational investment there. Meanwhile, the exchange rate mechanism would allow each country's central bank to pursue independent monetary policies for long periods, in that their fate in international exchanges would not be set by relative interest rates, expectations of future exchange-rate gyrations, and speculative bubbles. In line with Makhijani's goals, this centralized system (which, he argues, is not that more centralized than the current system) would allow a large amount of autonomy on the national level, while avoiding the competitive deflationary tendencies now reigning.

The obvious objection to this scheme is that monetary fiddling would not solve the severe inequality in economic and political power between nations. But Makhijani sees his monetary plan not as the whole story but as complementary to the other reforms. Easier mobility of labor, for example, would encourage "free-market" exchange rates to be more in line with PPP rates, while the revaluation of Third World exchange rates would keep migration to the

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rich countries from causing massive disruption (and political reaction) by raising wages in the poor world.

The fundamental problem with this plan is of course that instituting it would be extremely difficult, a fact not emphasized by Makhijani. The abolition of actual apartheid in South Africa was the result of a long struggle; the long-term effects of that system on the distribution of wealth and power seem even harder to abolish, given South Africa's dependence on world capitalism. Makhijani hopes that he can appeal to the "one-third of the [world] population that controls over 90 percent of the resources" to convince them to go along. But he has misidentified the enemy here: it is not this one-third who will object to the severe interference with the privileges of property, but the capitalists and the logic of the system that gives them so much power. These plans would run against the basic capitalist drive to accumulate profits by any means necessary on a world scale. The reaction to a scheme that significantly limits the pool of low-wage labor (for example) would be extreme. Thus it is a mystery why Makhijani wants simply to limit the power of multinational capital rather than to abolish it. While the book is quite interesting, it left me unsatisfied.

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Fire Eyes—Fire Between the Legs

by Joyce Stoller

Soraya Mire's *Fire Eyes* is a documentary film about female circumcision—a polite euphemism for the brutal reality of female genital mutilation. Little known in the West, this barbaric custom is practiced in forty countries worldwide—thirty in Africa alone, the Islamic Mideast, India, and Southeast Asia. It is estimated that 80 million women and girls have had their genitals excised—the equivalent of every adult female in the United States.

Lest males cry out indignantly, "Well, I've been circumcised, too!" female circumcision is nothing like the procedure performed on infant boys. In it, the entire female genitalia—the clitoris, labia majora, and labia minora are cut off, and then the raw edges of the wound are sewn together. Thus, a literal chastity belt is created of the girls's own flesh, leaving just a tiny hole for urination and menstruation. The procedure is most often perpetrated by midwives without anaesthesia and using unsterilized tools—razor blades, scissors, and broken glass.

Female circumcision is a rite of passage performed on young girls between the ages of four and eighteen, in which urination, menstruation, sex, and childbirth are ever after shrouded in pain. Complications, including death from hemorrhaging or infection, bladder infections, menstrual complications, and death from childbirth are legion but rarely reported, according to United Nations health officials.

The practice is thought to insure virginity in young brides (many of whom are still sold into marriage), and fidelity in wives, effectively inhibiting their sexual desire. It takes up to two weeks for a man to forcefully penetrate his bride, who had been sewn up as a

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child. "The more pain you are in, the more pleasure he gets," Mire says.

Female circumcision is so deeply ingrained in Somali culture that mothers of all classes insist that their daughters be circumcised, or they will not be considered fit for marriage.

Fire Eyes opens on a seven-year old Somali girl about to undergo circumcision. Her mother, who had suffered the same fate when she was seven, tells the child that she is carrying shame just for being a woman, and that "the evil piece of flesh" between her legs must be removed for her to become pure and worthy of a husband.

The procedure is performed by a midwife while the mother holds her down, and the girl's screams are drowned out by the chants of the mother and the other attendant women. When it is over, we see the bloody razor blade glistening on the ground as the girl is stitched shut—all without anaesthesia.

Somali filmmaker Mire, who was herself a victim of this practice, perceives the mutilation of girls as a manifestation of child abuse, and an ideological mechanism designed to perpetuate women's sexual, cultural, and economic inferiority. Female circumcision is thought to promote cleanliness, prevent immorality, and insure virginity. It is also thought by many Muslims that it is required by the Koran, though that is disputed by religious scholars.

Female circumcision is one of the most horrific legacies of patriarchy, along with foot binding in China and wife burning in India. But *Fire Eyes* examines the troubling fact that genital mutilation is a women's ritual, performed on young girls by their mothers, grandmothers, and aunts, who are themselves constrained by the cultural mindset from whence they came.

The film contains many interviews with Somalians, most of whom are for the procedure, along with doctors who attest to its often fatal results.

A Somali woman tells her daughter, "It is shameful that you are not circumcised. No Somali man would marry an uncircumcised woman."

A Somali man likens circumcision to the protection of his property. "You have to have a door on your house . . . you can't leave the door open. The same with women."

To begin the social changes necessary to break the chain of pain and end this barbaric practice, there must be public awareness of the problem.

The United Nations started discussing this issue in 1953. It took the World Health Organization forty years to announce its

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resolve to end female genital mutilation. On May 11, 1993 it called for the world condemnation and co-operation in ending this practice.

Alice Walker's best-selling book *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and her film *Warrior Marks* also dealt with female circumcision. *Fire Eyes* is one more attempt to broach the taboo topic, and raise the consciousness of Western women.

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The Shanghai Textbook

Maoist Economics and the Revolutionary Road to Communism: The Shanghai Textbook. Chicago: Banner Press, 1994, xlvii+346 pp. $15.00 paper.

This is a newly translated version of a work that was first published by Mao's supporters in Shanghai in 1975, a year before his death and the coup that set China back on the capitalist road. It is introduced by Raymond Lotta, who also provides an afterward, "The Theory and Practice of Maoist Planning." Mr. Lotta is one of the leading figures in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, and the author of *And Mao Makes 5: Mao Tsetung's Last Great Battle* (Banner Press, 1978).

As the subtitle implies, the book is didactic, a textbook on the principles of Maoism. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Maoist socialism was its insistence on raising the cultural, intellectual, and ideological level of the Chinese masses, and the chapter titles are nearly all maxims such as "Establish Mutual Relations Between People According to Socialist Principles" and "Frugality is an Important Principle in the Socialist Economy." As one might expect, Mao Tsetung is frequently quoted, and apart from repetition, appeal to authority is the main means of persuasion. But the point of the whole project was to equip cadres with a grasp of the doctrinal principles that guided their political movement, so the book's didacticism is hardly a fault.

Since the main intent of this brief review is to inform readers that a new English-language edition of this historic document has been published, there is no point in going on at length into its contents. Readers who live in, or near, Manhattan can obtain copies of the book at, Revolution Books, 13 E. 16th Street. Revolution Books can also fill mail orders. Their telephone number is (212) 691-3345.

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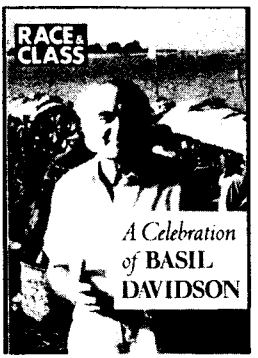

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– Tony Gifford

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(Continued from inside front cover)

Business Week (January 16), "is hardly the only country whose currency has become vulnerable to attack. In fact many economists think 1995 could see debt and currency crises that will make the 1992 European Monetary System blowup look tame by comparison. It's just the latest sign that as global investors become increasingly able to switch from economy to economy at the tap of a computer key, some countries may find themselves getting a drubbing they never anticipated." At the bottom of the page is a listing of "trouble spots in the currency market" which includes (in addition to Mexico) Argentina, Canada, Italy, France, and Spain. Others could of course be added. In its following issue (January 23), *Business Week* quotes George Soros, the legendary Hungarian financier who was reported to be the biggest winner in the 1992 currency debacle: "I'm concerned about the crash in Mexico and Latin America. That, I think, can have very severe repercussions throughout the world." Finally, President Clinton speaking at a news conference: "Solving Mexico's current troubles is important for the rest of Latin America and developing countries throughout the world. So we have to work on the confidence and on the liquidity crisis, and I think it's in our own interest to do so." (*New York Times*, January 12)

What does Clinton mean by "solving Mexico's troubles"? Does he mean helping Mexico to restructure its economy so that it can live within its means and escape from its perennial and increasing dependence on injections of foreign capital? No way. He means putting together a package of new loans and guarantees that will calm things down and enable Mexico to resume doing business as usual—at a reduced standard of living, the reduction of course to be absorbed by the masses, not by an obscenely wealthy ruling class that already has most of its assets safely stashed away in New York or Zurich. With luck that should solve the problem, the way capitalism always solves problems, i.e., by postponing them. As Marx once said, "Apres moi le deluge! is the watchword of every capitalist and every capitalist nation." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, ch. 10, sect. 5). The United States and Mexico are no exceptions.

The Zapatista uprising in Chiapas on January 1, 1994, suggests the only real solution to the current Mexican crisis. Despite all the hype emanating from Mexico City and enthusiastically swallowed by the U.S. media about the miraculous post-modern Mexican model ("a new First World country in the making") Chiapas tapped out a very different message and, against all odds, got it through to the whole world: underneath a glittering surface Mexico is a sinkhole of corruption and oppression.

We sadly report the death on December 11, 1994, of Carl Marzani, a close personal friend as well as a contributor to and supporter of *Monthly Review*. It is significant that in the report of his death in the *New York Times*, the Marzani family asked that in place of flowers, contributions should be sent to *MR* in Carl's memory. An article on his life and work will appear in the next issue.

(Continued on page 38)

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THE MIRAGE OF MODERNIZATION

BORIS KAGARLITSKY

Outstanding Russian left-dissident scholar Boris Kagarlitsky explores the contradictions of development and modernization in search of new explanations and directions for the third world, the West, and Eastern Europe. He sees modernization successfully subordinating traditional forms wherever it appears, but failing to replace the hierarchical structures in the world economy with either democracy or social and economic mobility for the masses. Kagarlitsky contends that globalization will set the stage for new and unprecedented political challenges from below, combining the demands for personal security, freedom, rational technological development, and defense of the planet.

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